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Africa Review

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*Special Issue: Update on the
Food Crisis*

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6 September 1985

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Africa Review

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6 September 1985

Special Issue: Update on the
Food Crisis

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	The immediate food crisis in 10 key Sub-Saharan countries has been relieved somewhat by an extraordinary international relief effort and a return to near normal rainfall in much of southern Africa and Kenya and good rains in the Sahel and the Horn. The requirements for foreign food donations will, nonetheless, be high, and the long-term outlook is grim because many of the countries will continue to produce crops far short of their needs. <div></div>		25X1
	Ethiopia <div></div>		25X1
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	Despite the onset of rain and the return of some refugees to their home areas from Sudanese and Ethiopian camps, Ethiopia will continue to require substantial emergency food aid next year. <div></div>		25X1
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	Sudan is among Africa's most seriously famine-stricken countries. Some 20 percent of the population is at risk of starvation, and more than 1 million refugees from neighboring states strain the country's limited resources. <div></div>		25X1
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	Somalia has not been hit as hard by the drought and famine as have other countries in the Horn, but the plight of its neighbors has nonetheless aggravated the country's chronic refugee problems. <div></div>		25X1

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Kenya

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The drought in Kenya is over, the food supply has returned to normal, and an excellent maize and wheat harvest is forecast for this year.

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Chad

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Western food aid and technical assistance have prevented widespread deaths from famine in Chad, but aid officials estimate that more than 900,000 people still face possible starvation.

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Niger

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Niger is one of the Sahelian countries worst hit by the drought. Some 3.5 million Nigeriens depend on food aid for survival, and this number is likely to increase until the harvest in October.

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Mali

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About 20 percent of Mali's 7.7 million people face possible starvation, and the numbers are growing. The country's primitive transportation system has impeded food deliveries.

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Burkina

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Burkina's food shortfall this year probably will be adequately covered by commitments from Western aid donors, including 66,000 metric tons promised by the United States. Plentiful rains allowed for normal planting this year, and a good crop is expected.

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Mozambique

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The return of rainfall to most areas of Mozambique has boosted food production, but insurgent activity, distribution problems, and the lingering effects of drought continue to hamper relief efforts.

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Botswana

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Even though Botswana is suffering from drought for the fourth consecutive year, it faces less of a threat than most of the other drought-afflicted African countries. Its economy is relatively stable and can support additional food imports to supplement external aid efforts.

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Articles have been coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Comments and queries regarding this publication may be directed to the Chief, Production Staff, Office of African and Latin American Analysis

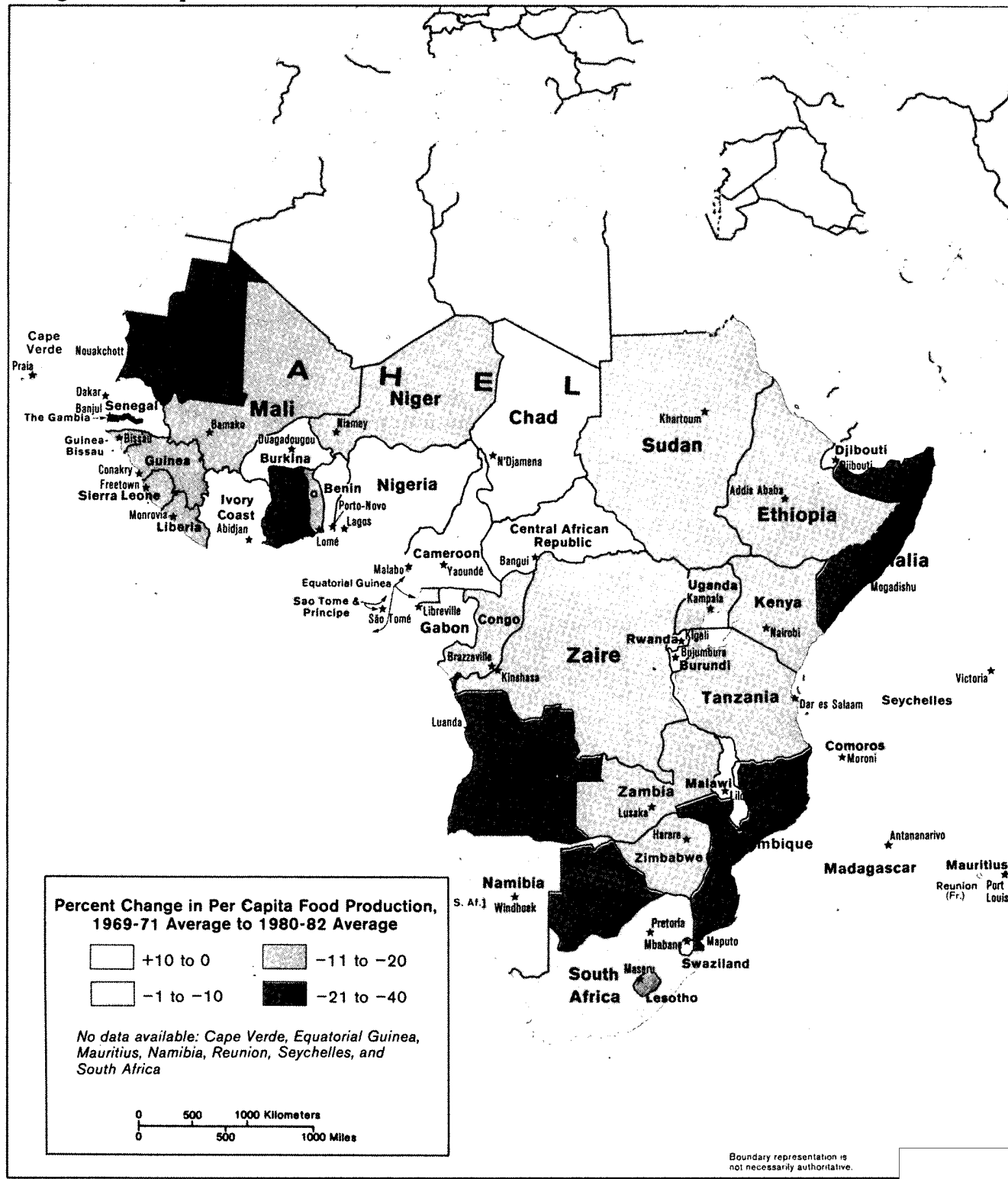
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Changes in Per Capita Food Production in Sub-Saharan Africa



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Articles

Overview

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This issue of the *Africa Review* briefly reviews the food situation in 10 key Sub-Saharan countries. The articles analyze the latest available information

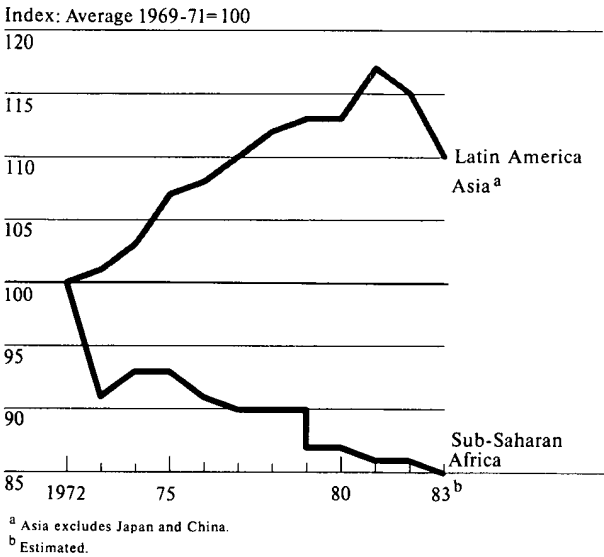
The Current Situation

In our judgment, the immediate food crisis has been relieved somewhat by an extraordinary international relief effort and a return to near normal rainfall in much of southern Africa and Kenya beginning last year and generally good rains this spring and summer in the Sahel¹ and the Horn.² The rains have complicated the distribution of food aid in some areas, but they have raised prospects for sharply improved harvests this fall in several of the countries that suffered severe food shortages. The drought in *Kenya* ended last autumn, and reliable forecasts indicate that Kenyan wheat and maize crops this year will be excellent, according to the US Embassy. Similarly, rains in *Somalia* have probably been the best in five years, according to Embassy reporting, and bumper corn and sorghum crops are expected.

The requirements of Sub-Saharan countries for foreign food donations will continue, nonetheless, to be high. Small crop surpluses that are projected for the southern areas of *Burkina* and *Chad* are unlikely to offset shortfalls in the northern regions of these countries. Similarly, rainfall patterns have missed several important agricultural production areas in *Niger*, and we doubt that Nigerien crops will provide

¹ The Sahel is a geographic belt that extends along the southern edge of the Sahara Desert from Chad to the Atlantic Ocean, comprising Burkina, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.
² The Horn comprises Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan.

Figure 1
Food Production, Per Capita, 1972-83



enough food to meet the needs through next year of the 3.5 million people—over one-half of the population—that are now depending on aid for survival. *Botswana*, which is suffering another year of severe drought, will need additional aid to supplement imports.

Ethiopia, *Mali*, *Mozambique*, and *Sudan* are still suffering disastrous conditions despite the improvement in rainfall. Food shortages in these

Secret**Sub-Saharan Africa: Selected Data on
the Current Food Situation***Thousand persons*

	Harvest period	Weather This Growing Season	Current Crop Conditions	Number Dependent on Food Aid	Estimated Aid Needs in 1985-86 ^a (1,000 metric tons)
East Africa					
Ethiopia	October- December	Favorable	Poor	7,700	NA
Kenya	August- September	Favorable	Excellent	0	0
Somalia	September- October	Favorable	Good	550	NA
Sudan	November- December	Favorable	Average	9,000	NA
West Africa					
Burkina	August- October	Normal	Average	500	200
Chad	October- December	Favorable	Average	900	NA
Mali	September- November	Favorable	Average	1,400	150
Niger	September- December	Normal	Average	3,500	200-300
Southern Africa					
Botswana	April-May	Unfavorable	Very poor	0	50
Mozambique	April-June	Normal	Poor	2,000	300

^a Data are based on sketchy estimates of harvests and stocks and reflect assessments of the additional food that will be needed to prevent food supplies from falling below recently available levels.



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states are the result not only of weather but also of the disruptive impact of resettlement policies and anti-insurgent operations in Ethiopia, administrative inefficiencies in Mali and Sudan, and insurgencies in Mozambique and Sudan. Moreover, all of these countries suffer from inadequate transportation networks that hamper the distribution of food aid.



1970s (see figure 1). In our view, this ominous trend is the result of a combination of climatic conditions, poor natural resources, rapid population growth, insurgency, and the often counterproductive policies of African governments—particularly the maintenance of low food prices, which creates major disincentives for farmers to produce.



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Longer Term Trends

The general outlook is grim because we believe many of the Sub-Saharan countries will continue to produce crops far short of their needs. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world in which per capita food production has been declining since at least the early

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Even an extended period without drought will not solve the problem of food production, in our judgment. According to an analysis by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, food production in Africa in 1988 will be the same as in 1984 even if rainfall is normal.

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Ethiopia ☐

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Despite the onset of rain and the return of some refugees to their home areas from Sudanese and Ethiopian camps, Ethiopia will continue to require substantial emergency food aid next year as agricultural production lags behind local needs. The Mengistu government's commitment to anti-insurgent and doctrinaire socialist policies have aggravated the food crisis. The government, meanwhile, is moving to close feeding camps and continues to try to restrict the activities of Western donors. ☐

who have been slow to participate in producer collectives, are responsible for most of the country's crop production. ☐

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The government has actually increased collectivization through its program of resettling people from the overpopulated and insurgent-torn north to the south, which we believe will further divert resources from private agriculture. ☐

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Obstacles to Food Self-Sufficiency

Weather patterns appear to be improving again after nearly four years of drought, although related problems probably will continue to bedevil Ethiopia for some time. Rainfall in June was above normal, and meteorological data indicate that precipitation probably will be at least average for the coming year. Nevertheless, the late arrival of the "Belg" or spring rains this year suggests that the May to July harvest, which normally accounts for 10 percent of Ethiopia's cereal production, was at or below normal levels. Even during years of adequate rainfall, Ethiopia still has had significant agricultural shortfalls and has had to import food. ☐

☐
the resettlement program is likely to continue to be a drain on the economy. The settlements are extremely isolated and primitive and are plagued by insects harmful to crops. The refugees, who are reportedly in poor physical condition, probably will remain dependent on government-supplied food for some time. ☐

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By all accounts, Chairman Mengistu remains committed to the resettlement program, which the government has touted as a means of breaking the cycle of famine and drought in the north, an area most observers agree is unable to feed its population. In our judgment, Addis Ababa also believes that moving peasants from the strife-torn north will cut deeply into local support provided to the insurgencies, as well as extend the government's political and economic control. ☐

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Although more refugees apparently are returning home to begin planting, inadequate land preparation and the lack of seed, fertilizer, and draft animals probably will further inhibit crop production this fall, according to the US Embassy. The US Department of Agriculture indicates that additional food requirements will be large in 1986 before declining in 1987. ☐

Effects on Key Constituencies

Drought conditions forced the government to impose austerity measures earlier this year, but Addis Ababa thus far has attempted to shield key urban and military constituencies from the worst effects of the famine. The US Embassy reports, nevertheless, that the food situation in Addis Ababa has deteriorated seriously and that people are increasingly unable to purchase basic commodities. The government has

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Food production is likely to be adversely affected by misguided government economic policies, in our judgment. Addis Ababa apparently has no plans to increase low producer prices as incentives to agricultural production, or to reduce its emphasis on collectivization. The regime gives preferential treatment in taxation, investment, and agricultural supplies to state farms and peasants who form producer cooperatives, even though peasant farmers,

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used scarce foreign exchange to buy food for the cities and recently gave priority to two ships unloading 40,000 metric tons of wheat purchased on concessionary terms from France, according to the US Embassy. In addition, vitally needed trucks have been diverted from relief efforts to move commercial grain to the cities. We believe the government will divert relief aid as necessary to ensure adequate food for city dwellers. []

While austerity measures also have been extended to the military for the first time since Mengistu consolidated power in 1977, the government has largely protected the military from food shortages. Soldiers and their families still receive rations from the government, and US officials indicate that the promise of regular food is used as a recruiting incentive. []

[] we believe that the military gets first crack at some goods purchased commercially by the regime and at agricultural commodities supplied by farmers and state farms to meet government quotas. []

Curbing International Donors

Despite dependence on foreign donors, Addis Ababa is attempting to increase its control over international relief operations. Mengistu long has been suspicious of Western donors, particularly the United States, which supplies the lion's share of emergency assistance. Mengistu and other key government officials, according to the US Embassy [] view the United States as the main threat to Ethiopia's Marxist revolution and the driving force behind alleged Western efforts to subvert the government. Embassy reporting indicates that Mengistu and his advisers believe Washington aids insurgent groups directly, uses relief efforts to channel additional aid to the rebels, and encourages Sudan and Somalia to assist them. These fears probably are behind Addis Ababa's demands that relief agencies replace foreign workers with Ethiopians and its plan to close down the feeding camps in the next several months. We believe pressure from the international community will slow government action, but over time Mengistu probably will move to restrict foreign donors and increase Ethiopia's control over relief operations. []

Outlook

Although the famine has required the government to reallocate some resources and initiate austerity measures over the past year, we believe it will not pose a serious political threat to the regime in the near term. Mengistu probably will retain power by continuing to placate key Army and urban groups and by relying on his pervasive control of security services, the military, and neighborhood watch groups to root out suspected opposition. At the same time, Addis Ababa will rely on Western largess to feed the rural population without offering significant changes in its doctrinaire policies. A major increase in fighting in the north, however, could reverse the flow of refugees returning to their homes and further impede Western relief efforts. []

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Sudan

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Sudan is among Africa's most seriously famine-stricken countries. Some 20 percent of the country's population remains at risk, and more than 1 million refugees from neighboring states strain limited resources. Even though US and other donors have narrowed the food gap in the past year, Sudan's grossly inadequate infrastructure has hindered the distribution of the aid received. In addition, bureaucratic inefficiency, fuel shortages, corruption, and the insurgency in the south continue to complicate relief efforts.

leaving a gap of nearly 2.1 million tons. Food aid has climbed to about 1.7 million metric tons—the United States accounts for 80 percent—leaving a gap of only 400,000 tons.

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Sudan's new leaders—grappling with serious political, security, and financial problems—see the famine as one more burden rather than the major concern. Their immediate focus has been retaining political control, including containing civil unrest by keeping the capital Khartoum well-stocked with food and fuel. The government continues to cooperate fully with relief efforts in the hope of attracting additional financial support. Khartoum, nonetheless, will oppose any large-scale cross-border feeding operations into Ethiopia to preclude Addis Ababa increasing its support for southern insurgents.

The narrowing of the food gap has focused attention on distribution problems. Port Sudan has relatively good unloading and storage capacity; most of the trouble exists with ground and air transport:

- Railroads suffer from shortages of locomotives, freight cars, spare parts, and fuel.
- Road transport lacks sufficient fuel and trucks and has been hampered by rains that are flooding roadways.
- Air transportation is hindered by poor airfields and facilities that limit the type, size, and number of aircraft used in relief operations.

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Moreover, fuel shortages may intensify soon as oil supplies from earlier relief deliveries run out.

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The Current Situation

An estimated 9 million Sudanese nationals and refugees are receiving some type of assistance through international relief efforts. Indeed, Sudan's longstanding policy of providing asylum for those fleeing from neighboring countries has significantly added to the drought-related problems: over the past year, approximately 240,000 Ethiopians and 120,000 Chadians have crossed into Sudan. Ugandan refugees, moreover, total 250,000.

The transportation problem has taken on an added sense of urgency as famine problems shift westward. Heavy rains in the west have boosted production prospects, but also closed many roads. Air flights are far fewer than needed, according to the US Embassy. For example, some 15 flights per day to El Geneina are needed, but only three arrive daily. In addition, the runway there is breaking up under the weight of C-130 transports. The recent deployment by the United States of three civilian helicopters in the west and the supply of 10 new railway cars and spare parts should help to alleviate some of the problems. Distribution problems appear to have eased in eastern Sudan because of the shorter distances from Port Sudan as well as fewer-than-expected Ethiopian refugees.

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International relief efforts have made a substantial contribution toward meeting food needs during the current marketing year (1 November 1984–31 October 1985). USAID estimated annual Sudanese grain requirements of close to 3.7 million metric tons; domestic production is only 1.5 million tons annually. A severe shortage of foreign exchange has limited commercial imports to just over 100,000 metric tons,

The US Embassy reports that prospects for delivery of food to the south remain poor in the near future. Similar to the west, rains have complicated transportation, and the security threat posed by the insurgency and general lawlessness remain the major deterrents.

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Moreover, the lack of government control outside of Khartoum has led to corruption and diversion of aid when local officials have been given the responsibility for food distribution. The US Embassy reports a USAID survey in early June in the Kordofan region indicated that most of the grain was allocated to Army families. In another case, World Food Program grain released to government officials in a northern regional city ended up mainly in the stores of local merchants. In addition, bandits have preyed on relief convoys in the west. []

Government Policy

In contrast to the former Nimeiri regime, Khartoum's new leadership admits publicly the severity of the drought and famine. The leadership has cooperated fully with the international relief effort and has kept Sudan's borders open to refugees, partially for humanitarian reasons but mainly to project a positive image that will attract additional financial support. The Sudanese official media have increased coverage of international relief efforts. To some extent, the willingness to admit dependence on foreign food donors is embarrassing and highlights the government's inability to solve the country's problems. []

Khartoum's efforts to project a nonaligned foreign policy have not yet produced a significant increase in aid. Libya had reportedly promised a 1,000-truck convoy of food aid, but the US Embassy reports that so far only 43 trucks have arrived. Libyan aircraft donated to fly relief missions to the west have not been used because they are too large for Sudan's airfields. In addition, only a portion of the 300,000 tons of petroleum promised by the Libyans has been delivered. The Soviets have sent only a nominal shipment of food aid since the coup, and the Iranians have offered to send unspecified aid following the recent renewal of ties. []

Outlook and Implications

Sudan will look to the United States again next year for substantial food aid. Although recent rains will help boost output, it will take at least a couple of years before production returns to its historical levels. Sudan, moreover, is making little progress in paying overdue debts and securing credit, which will further limit already low commercial imports. []

US and Western donations of grain and other forms of aid will continue to be a source of influence with the current government in Khartoum, although the close relationship with the former Nimeiri regime is unlikely to be duplicated. The presence, however, of Libyans, Iranians, and possibly Soviets in greater numbers poses additional security threats to US personnel involved in relief efforts as does Khartoum's inability to maintain security in the west and south. []

The government is likely to continue cooperation with the international relief efforts and allow its border to remain open to refugees. It probably will be less willing, however, to allow large-scale cross-border feeding operations into Ethiopia over the next year. Khartoum is hoping to persuade Addis Ababa to end support for Sudan's southern insurgents and will want to avoid any appearance of support to Ethiopian dissidents. Sudanese leaders, however, may agree to cross-border feeding programs if they can be carried out without angering Ethiopia. []

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Somalia ☐

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Somalia has not been hit as hard by the drought and famine as have other countries in the Horn, but the plight of its neighbors has, nonetheless, aggravated the country's chronic refugee problems. President Siad continues to refuse to mount a program to resettle the hundreds of thousands of refugees in camps, despite pressures to do so from several major donor countries, or to permit an international agency to conduct an accurate head count of the refugees. Siad is portraying the refugee problem as larger than it is and is laying the blame on Ethiopia's door. He also wants to keep refugees isolated from the general population to avoid aggravating tribal and political conflicts that bedevil his regime. ☐

Impact of Drought and Famine

The US Embassy reports that the rains last May and June in Somalia probably were the best in five years. The rains, which have permitted the cultivation of additional land, together with the introduction of new farming techniques and seeds, should produce a bumper crop of corn and sorghum. Last year, northern Somalia experienced drought, but not on the scale that ravaged other parts of Africa. Moreover, the impact was mitigated by Somalia's own food stocks, an adequate harvest, and timely international assistance. ☐

Nevertheless, prolonged drought and famine conditions in Ethiopia have been major factors behind the movement of approximately 100,000 nomadic Somalis into Somalia over the past year. Limited screening by UN refugee officials indicate that not all of these people have fled because of the drought. Many have left because of political and military pressures in Ethiopia. ☐

The Refugee Issue

Somalia's refugee problem began during the Ogaden war in 1977-78, when over 1 million Somalis fled Ethiopia. They were housed in camps scattered throughout Somalia and supported by international relief efforts. In 1982, the United Nations, after months of extremely difficult negotiations, obtained

Somali Government acknowledgement that the refugee population had dropped to approximately 700,000 people. At present, the US Embassy cautions that while it is difficult to determine the actual number of refugees who still reside in Somalia's 36 camps, even the 700,000 figure probably is inflated for several reasons:

- Data provided by the League of Red Cross Societies—and rejected by Mogadishu and the UN—indicate that over 300,000 refugees have returned to Ethiopia for various reasons since 1983.
- The refugee population in the camps probably includes many local people who find conditions there are markedly better than in the countryside.
- The planned yearly refugee food aid of 120,000 metric tons is insufficient to feed 700,000 people, yet starvation is not noted in the camps. ☐

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Mogadishu has consistently rebuffed efforts by the United States and other members of the donor community to evaluate the number of refugees actually in Somalia. The government uses its claims of substantial numbers of refugees to maintain its charge that Ethiopia is pursuing harsh policies toward the ethnic Somali population of the Ogaden. Thus, despite Mogadishu's 1983 agreement to begin resettling refugees within Somalia, no specific plans have been approved. Nor, according to the US Embassy, Mogadishu has been willing to integrate the refugees into local communities. Instead, the government has lobbied for the establishment of expensive, isolated communities with all social services provided by foreign donors. ☐

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Impact of the Refugee Situation

The costs of the refugee program total almost \$100 million per year, according to the US Embassy. Although most of these expenses are picked up by the donor community, the refugees still place a drain on Somalia's limited financial and administrative resources, which could be used to promote needed economic recovery and development efforts. ☐

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Several foreign observers have noted a growing popular resentment to the refugee camps, even though some local residents benefit from the facilities. International assistance allows the refugees generally to receive better food, medical, and social services than the local population. In addition, some US Embassy sources report that tribal rivalries are fueled by the prolonged existence of the camps. In northern Somalia, for example, local Issaq tribesmen resent the presence of large numbers of rival Ogadeni tribesmen who compete with them for water, firewood, and other necessities. The poorly managed camps are also potential breeding grounds for diseases that spread to the local population. Earlier this year, Somalia suffered through a cholera outbreak that was traced to a large refugee camp outside Hargeisa, in northern Somalia.

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Outlook

The refugee situation will probably not change appreciably in the near term. For domestic political reasons, Mogadishu will continue to resist any effort to calculate the actual refugee population in the camps or to permit resettlement among the general population. As long as local UN officials support Mogadishu's higher estimates of people in need, the international donor community will be unable to force changes. The Somali Government also will attempt to defuse local resentment toward the camps by allowing more indigenous residents "into the camp system," thereby spreading the economic and social benefits enjoyed by the refugees.

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Kenya ☐

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The drought in Kenya is over, the food supply has returned to normal, and an excellent maize and wheat harvest is forecast for this year. Kenya managed foreign food relief well, according to US Embassy reporting, and the economy has already rebounded to its predrought level. ☐

Excellent Harvest Forecast

The worst Kenyan drought of this century is over, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization confirms that the country's food supply has returned to normal. Good short rains last autumn, and even better long rains this spring, ended the drought. These rains and intensive planting by farmers have led officials to forecast excellent wheat and maize crops for this year, according to the US Embassy. Maize production is expected to increase by roughly 55 percent over 1984 to about 2.5 million metric tons, and Kenya will once again be self-sufficient in maize. Wheat production should reach approximately 250,000 metric tons—a whopping 260-percent increase over last year and about half of Kenya's normal yearly wheat consumption. ☐

Managing the Drought

The US Embassy reports that the government managed the 18-month drought well. Foreign food relief was well coordinated, Mombasa port accommodated two to three times the amount of grain imports normally handled, distribution of food supplies took place with a minimum of redtape, corruption was low, and there were no food riots. Nongovernmental organizations played an important role in food distribution, and the government stayed in close and regular contact with donor countries. Moreover, Kenya acquired large stocks of seed so that when the drought ended, extensive planting could quickly begin. ☐

Kenya's superior management of the food crisis has enabled the economy to rebound more quickly than some Western observers had expected. According to the US Embassy, the economy is in approximately the same condition as it was early in 1984 before the impact of the drought had been felt. Kenya's balance-of-payments deficit is down from 10 percent to 4 percent, and inflation is about 12 percent—roughly half the predrought rate. In addition, Kenya has gradually devalued its shilling and exercised restraint in monetary expansion. ☐

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Outlook

President Moi's government has emerged essentially unscathed—both politically and economically—from the trauma of the drought, and we believe that the forthcoming bumper crops will increase Kenyan stability and boost Moi's personal standing. Kenya's credibility among donor nations also appears higher today because of Moi's competent handling of the drought crisis. According to the IMF, Kenya's economic outlook continues to improve—a significant accomplishment for an agriculturally based society following a severe drought. ☐

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Chad []

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Western food aid and technical assistance over the past six months have prevented widespread deaths from famine but aid officials estimate that more than 900,000 of Chad's 5.2 million population still face possible starvation. Food scarcities are likely to persist at least until harvest time in two months, and continued heavy rains and renewed civil strife are likely to complicate relief efforts. Rains in the south have been widespread and plentiful since May, and some Chadian officials believe this growing season will be one of the best in the past 15 years. They are optimistic that the 1985-86 crop will solve the food shortage in the southern Sudanian zone and reduce problems in the northern Sahelian zone. Escalating violence in the east and south, however, could hinder the harvest while forcing many refugees across the border to relief centers in western Sudan and northern Central African Republic. []

President Habre's first priority is fighting the Libyan-backed insurgents, but he has tried more diligently in recent months to solve food distribution problems. CottonChad—the country's largest government-run enterprise—has made 70 trucks available for food distribution. Authorities have clamped down on the illegal levying of taxes by soldiers on trucks transporting food aid to the south, according to the US Embassy. In addition, the joint committee of government and donor representatives that meets weekly to coordinate and establish distribution plans, has worked well and may serve as a model for other countries, according to US aid officials. []

Transportation bottlenecks that reduced food aid to an average of only 8,509 metric tons per month from November through May—well below the 15,000 tons planned—have been identified and largely dealt with, according to aid officials. Food shipments from the port in Douala, Cameroon have increased from 6,000 metric tons to 26,000 metric tons per month. International donors have provided 150 trucks for inland food distribution and a semipermanent bridge across the Chari River between Cameroon and Chad has been completed. Although travel through Nigeria

is subject to interruption by official border closures, the situation has improved in the past few months, and relief trucks are now allowed to cross into Chad. []

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Nevertheless, distribution problems remain. Heavy rains have washed out key bridges and made many roads in the interior impassable, prompting the government and several donors to call for airlift operations to distribute food. []

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Violence in the south between government troops and Libyan-backed rebels, on the rise since mid-July, also may complicate relief efforts and reduce the October harvest. []

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[] Dissident activity in central Chad also has increased. The security situation is likely to worsen in the coming months as the rainy season impedes government troops and the Libyans continue to resupply the rebels. []

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The deteriorating security situation could result in large flows of refugees into neighboring countries. The numbers could approach those of last year, when an estimated 200,000 Chadians migrated into the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Sudan, and Nigeria to avoid drought in the northern Sahelian zone and civil strife in the central and south.

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According to aid officials, 125,000 people are at risk in the two prefectures that border western Sudan, and, in our view, rising violence and unavailability of food could lead many to head for US-sponsored relief centers recently established in western Sudan. []

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Niger ☐

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Niger is one of the Sahelian countries worst hit by drought. The number of Nigeriens dependent on food aid for survival has increased to 3.5 million—more than half of the total population—and is likely to increase until the harvest in October, according to the US Embassy. As a result of donor pressure, the Nigerien Government has markedly improved the distribution of food aid. Moreover, neighboring Togo, Benin, and Nigeria have smoothed the movement of emergency food shipments through their ports to landlocked Niger over the past several months. Nevertheless, donors remain concerned over the high level of malnutrition among children in some refugee camps and among the rural populace in general. ☐

recover within two years if adequate quantities of seeds are available and efficiently distributed; the replenishment of livestock herds would require up to four years. ☐

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The US Embassy in Niamey believes that current food stocks will prove sufficient to meet requirements through the end of the year. By early July, the Embassy reported that 93,000 metric tons of grain out of a total of 100,000 tons initially committed by the United States had arrived in Niger, and 71,000 tons had been distributed to drought victims. Washington has pledged an additional 45,000 metric tons of aid this year, the first 25,000 tons of which is scheduled to arrive in Niger by October. According to the US Embassy, aid pledged by donors this year totals 323,429 metric tons, with 193,725 tons delivered to the country and 141,835 tons distributed. ☐

Niger experienced a 50-percent decrease in agricultural production and a 30-percent decline in its livestock herds during 1984 alone, devastating the economy. These two sectors provide the principal source of livelihood for about 90 percent of the population. Livestock is the country's second major export after uranium. The drought worsened Niger's balance of payments in 1985 by reducing export earnings (mainly livestock and cowpeas) and increasing food imports. The effect of the drought on government revenue in 1985, however, is expected to be minimal because of the country's subsistence economy and relatively low tax rate. ☐

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Niger's crops, mostly cowpeas, are benefiting from the rains that arrived during the planting season in July. Nevertheless, the US Embassy projects this year's harvest at no more than 75 percent of the predrought harvest of 1983, despite abundant rainfall into late August. Seed problems, total rainfall levels below the 30-year average, and inconsistent rainfall patterns that have left several important agricultural production areas dry, make unlikely an early recovery from the effects of the drought. The Embassy reports that agricultural production figures suggest that the food shortfall for 1985 and 1986 will, at a minimum, be 176,144 metric tons and could be as much as 319,325 tons. The US Agency for International Development estimates that crop production could

Inadequate management of the country's food needs could provoke political upheaval, in our view. Serious food shortages and mismanagement of relief during the great drought of the early 1970s were in part responsible for President Kountche's military coup in 1974 against a corrupt and inefficient civilian regime. After seizing power, Kountche's military government raised cereal prices for producers, concentrated investment on food rather than cash crops, and improved storage and distribution facilities, making the country almost self-sufficient in food production. ☐

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Nevertheless, Kountche has come under fire in the last several months for breakdowns in the food distribution systems that have been attributed to corruption and incompetence among members of his regime. Although some problems appear to have been ironed out, we believe that the President will be under continuing pressure to ensure that his country's food needs are met—with a minimum of delay, corruption, and inefficiency—and to persuade his fellow Nigeriens to accept a prolonged recovery period of severe economic austerity. ☐

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Mali ☐

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Approximately 1.4 million people—about 20 percent of Mali's 7.7 million population—are at risk of starvation and the numbers are growing, according to the US Embassy in Bamako. There is a food deficit of 230,000 metric tons for fiscal year 1985, and serious shortages are expected until the harvest in October. Some 40,000 metric tons are backlogged in Lome, Abidjan, and Dakar awaiting delivery to Mali. Only one-half of the 12,000 metric tons of US supplies routed through Dakar have been shipped to Mali because of the low capacity of the Dakar-Bamako railway. ☐

migration of farmers to urban areas, and a dangerously reduced water table will make agricultural recovery a long and difficult process. In addition, the US Embassy in Mali reports that large areas of land have undergone major ecological damage and may no longer be able to sustain their previous levels of people and animals. ☐

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Mali's primitive transportation system, especially poor in drought-stricken northern and eastern regions, has impeded food deliveries. Paying bonuses to truck drivers has improved delivery somewhat, but fuel shortages and road conditions still delay shipments. An Italian airlift from Dakar to Timbouctou and the recent completion of a US military raft-ferry at Gao on the Niger River have eased the backlog in some areas. ☐

As long as President Traore appears committed to combating drought and trying to overcome food distribution problems, we do not believe serious political instability will result from the drought. There is no organized opposition to his rule, and students, trade unionists, and other dissidents are weak and divided. Moreover, any group that aspires to oust Traore almost certainly would need the support of the armed forces, which remain loyal to the President.

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Administrative difficulties are a major obstacle to the distribution of emergency relief food. Although the government has cooperated with all Western donors, two decades of inefficient agricultural policies, the lack of a comprehensive food plan, and a national relief agency that consists of one man complicates donor efforts. A multidonor agency and the US Agency for International Development in Bamako collect information on donations, but donors have not agreed on a long-term method of responding to Mali's food needs. ☐

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Prospects for recovery are bleak, and the threat of famine is likely to persist. Bamako and other southern cities are likely to receive a major influx of people from drought-stricken areas that will strain limited resources. The health of those migrating is precarious because of nutritional deficiencies, overcrowding, and unsanitary living conditions. Although the fall crop may help to ease immediate food shortages if the rains due this summer are adequate, seed shortages,

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Burkina

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Burkina is not among the Sahelian nations most seriously affected by the drought. The US Embassy in Ouagadougou estimates that Burkina's food shortfall this year of 199,000 metric tons, about the same as last year's, will be covered by commitments from Western aid donors—including 66,000 metric tons promised by the United States. Adequate rains allowed for normal planting this year, and the Embassy expects a good crop.

The Embassy reports only regional food shortages, with surpluses in the south and severe deficits in the remote north. According to press reports, about one-third of Burkina's estimated seven million people are affected by drought, and 500,000 are in immediate danger. Migrants from neighboring Niger and Mali, who seek relief from more serious drought conditions in their countries, may increase Burkina's food requirements and strain relief efforts over the longer term. According to the US Embassy, some 50,000 migrants now are in Burkina's far north.

The government has said publicly it will combat the drought and transport food to those in need. In April, Head of Government Sankara launched a program to combat desertification by restricting wood cutting and encouraging the mass planting of trees. The US Embassy reports that a National Drought Commission coordinates government relief efforts, and Ouagadougou has mobilized the military and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, local organizations designed to build support for Sankara's revolution, to help in the relief program. According to Western aid personnel, state intervention in the domestic grain market has helped to minimize hoarding by powerful grain merchants. The Embassy reports, however, that many officials responsible for relief activities lack the staff, finances, and vehicles to move food from secondary points to rural villages. The primitive internal transport network hampers deliveries to remote regions, and road transport is likely to become more difficult in the coming months as rains erode the dirt roads.

Donor relations with the Sankara regime have been excellent this year, in sharp contrast to the often strained partnership in 1983 and 1984. According to the US Embassy, Ouagadougou has established a secretariat to coordinate activities with Western donors and nongovernmental organizations. Western aid officials—who have regular access to the government—praise the regime's efforts, and Burkinan officials openly seek Western advice and technical assistance.

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Regional transportation networks provide fairly regular food shipments to Burkina. Almost all food aid is shipped from the ports in Abidjan and Lome, although they are often clogged as a result of massive aid shipments to other Sahelian states. Should these ports become too congested, relief officials believe Cotonou's port can be used as a temporary alternative. More than half of the food aid is transported from Abidjan to Burkina on the jointly owned Ivorian-Burkinan railroad, which suffers from occasional maintenance problems. Food also is transported on excellent, all-weather roads over flat terrain from Abidjan and Lome. The US Embassy reports that since June truck deliveries from these two ports have improved significantly as a result of a freight rate increase instituted by the Sankara regime.

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Over the longer term, however, prospects are dim. Despite Sankara's well-intentioned hopes that his country will attain food self-sufficiency, agricultural expansion probably will be limited by generally unfavorable climatic conditions, inadequate water supplies, and poor, heavily eroded soils. Almost 15 years of poor rains has done permanent damage to vast areas and, according to the US Embassy, only the southwest has the potential for increased yields. What limited agricultural progress Burkina may make will be offset by the annual population growth of 2.5 percent, leaving the country to rely increasingly on Western food aid.

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Mozambique

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The return of rainfall to most areas of Mozambique has boosted food production, but insurgent activity, distribution problems, and the lingering effects of drought continue to hamper relief and rehabilitation efforts. Mozambique is poorly positioned to overcome these problems in the near future, and pockets of malnutrition are likely to persist.

Critical Provinces

The severity and causes of the food shortages vary from province to province but are the greatest in the central and southern regions:

- According to the government, Sofala Province in Central Mozambique has been hit hardest. Intense insurgent activity has discouraged relief efforts in several districts.
- In Gaza Province in the south, the areas around Guija and Manjacuze remain severely affected by drought. The number of people considered at risk has risen from some 90,000 to more than 220,000, according to press reporting. In other parts of the province, farmers have not been able to take advantage of the rains because of a shortage of tools and seeds.
- Improved rainfall and intensified relief efforts have reduced the number of people at risk from food shortages in the western province of Tete from about 500,000 to around 400,000 this year, according to press reports. The major remaining difficulty is the secure transport of supplies to afflicted areas.
- The drought remains serious in much of Inhambane Province in the south. About 400,000 people are affected by food shortages, according to press reports. Refugees continue to flee drought and insurgency to the coast, putting additional stress on relief efforts and water supplies.¹

¹ A notable exception to continued food shortages in Inhambane Province is the area around the coastal city of Vilanculos, where the reopening of the main road is enabling relief supplies to move by truck to drought victims, according to press reports.

Impact of the Insurgency

Constant insurgent attacks on vital transportation lines from the key ports of Maputo and Beira have stalled rehabilitation and recovery efforts. US Embassy reporting indicates that in many areas farmers had plowed their fields, but the unreliable transportation system prevented delivery of seeds and other farm equipment in time for planting this year. Marketing crops from cultivated areas is also difficult. Repairs on damaged transportation lines is slow because of the lack of foreign exchange to purchase equipment and spare parts. The government has provided supply convoys with military escorts, but these are expensive and they slow relief operations.

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Insurgent attacks on supply trucks, as well as the general disrepair of transport facilities and lack of fuel, have hampered relief efforts, according to US Embassy reporting. In an attempt to get supplies delivered to afflicted areas, major donors have contributed trucks and fuel.

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Reform Program

The problems have focused Maputo's attention on the shortcomings of the agricultural sector. In an effort to increase food production, the government is continuing its policy, begun three years ago, of encouraging small-scale and private farming. Large state farms are to be sliced into smaller collective farms and individual plots, according to press reports. Maputo has raised producer prices on a wide range of food and export crops in an effort to encourage production. According to the Embassy, the program has had some success in a few areas in the south that have been untouched by the insurgency.

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Maputo also is promoting Western investment in the economy, particularly in the agricultural sector, but the insurgency has prevented significant progress. Expectations for investment by Western and South African companies following the signing of the Nkomati accord have been largely unfulfilled. Of the numerous firms that have visited Mozambique, none has proceeded with investment in agriculture. []

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Outlook

Government officials report that, despite the rains this year, agricultural production—combined with Western food aid—will be insufficient to meet the Mozambique's food needs. Maputo expects that food stocks will be exhausted by October and that there will be a 300,000 ton deficit, about 40 percent of the country's food needs. In an effort to bridge the gap, the government continues to seek additional aid from the international community, according to press reports. []

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Unless another drought occurs, the insurgency and economic liberalization will remain the keys to agricultural development in Mozambique. Attracting investment in the agricultural sector will depend on the government's ability to implement liberalization policies and deal effectively with the insurgents who are now active throughout the country and show no signs of abating their attacks. Guerrilla activity already has forced several countries to withdraw advisers from rural areas, and we expect donors to become increasingly reluctant to fund projects that cannot be protected. []

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Botswana

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Botswana, suffering under drought conditions for the fourth consecutive year, faces less of a threat than most of the other drought-afflicted African countries. Seasonal rains, averaging about 35 to 60 percent below normal, in some areas have reduced exports of beef, the country's second-largest foreign exchange earner. Lack of rainfall also has adversely affected, the quantity and quality of meat, according to US Embassy reporting. The shortage of grazing land has cut the national herd from 3 million to 2.5 million head, and further reductions are likely. Sorghum and corn production this year is estimated at 20,000 metric tons, which is less than half of the 50,000 tons produced in a normal year. While this is nearly three times last year's crop, it represents only about 10 percent of Botswana's food needs. Botswana normally produces only 25 percent of its food requirements.

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Unlike many other drought aid recipients, Botswana's economy is relatively stable and can support additional food imports to supplement external aid efforts. Last year, an increase in diamond production boosted Botswana's total export earnings to a record level. Its current account was again in surplus and external indebtedness remains low. Another unique feature of the country is its geography. The majority of the population resides in the east along the main rail line, which facilitates relief efforts. Despite the drought, Botswana should meet its food needs this year, with the help of some 50,000 tons of external aid and about 130,000 tons of commercial imports.

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